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**GRANITE BAY ACCOUNTANT CHARGED WITH
STEALING MILLIONS FROM CLIENTS**

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that his office has filed a felony information charging STEPHEN HOUSE, 50, of Granite Bay, California with mail fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. §1341 in connection with money HOUSE is charged with stealing from clients of his accounting and investment business.

This case is the product of an extensive investigation by the Sacramento FBI.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Patrick K. Hanly, who is prosecuting the case, the information alleges that HOUSE, a financial consultant, accountant and owner of House and Company, stole and swindled his clients out of over \$3.5 million dollars. The Information alleges that HOUSE provided accounting and financial services to his clients and in many cases had signature authority on his clients' checking accounts. Also, according to the Information, HOUSE acted as the trustee of various estates of deceased clients and, as such, had control of the money and accounts associated with these estates. Between the year 2000, and continuing to the present, HOUSE is charged with stealing money from his clients and using the United States Mails in the process. Specifically, HOUSE is alleged to have embezzled money entrusted to him by his clients and business partners for purposes of investment, management or for payment of taxes and that, as the trustee of certain estates of deceased clients, HOUSE would write checks to himself drawn on the estate's account without the permission or authorization of the beneficiaries of the estates. Furthermore, HOUSE is alleged to have altered bank statements and other documents to disguise his fraudulent transactions. HOUSE is also alleged to have purchased real property in his own name with the money he embezzled from his clients. The Information further charges that HOUSE would receive money from victims who intended to invest their money and instead used the money for his own benefit and then, once his crime had been discovered, HOUSE created fraudulent loan documents purporting to evidence loans to him from his clients to try and justify the money he had embezzled from his clients.

If convicted, the maximum penalty under federal law for this offense is 20 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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